



# Southeast Asia

## on a shoestring



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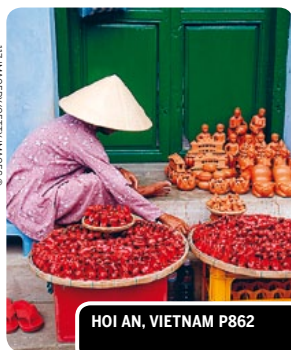
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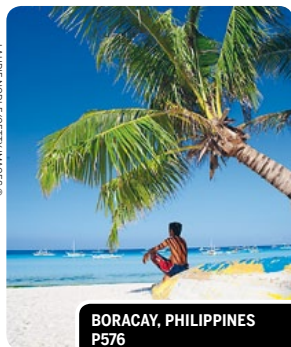
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## Plan Your Trip

# Itineraries



8  
WEEKS

## The Best of Southeast Asia

This 'sampler plate' of Southeast Asia will have you jetting between countries to hit the highlights: cool cities, ancient kingdoms, beautiful beaches and smoldering volcanoes.

Most international airlines fly to **Bangkok**, a chaotic but fantastic city filled with fun and food. Take the direct bus to **Siem Reap** to see Angkor's magnificent temples. Bus to charming **Phnom Penh** to study Cambodia's tragic not-so-distant past and on to Vietnam's bustling **Ho**

**Chi Minh City**, a study in resiliency. Work your way north with a stop in adorable **Hoi An**, for bespoke fashions and atmospheric strolls, and on to the antique streets of **Hanoi**. Air-lift out of Vietnam to laid-back **Luang Prabang**, Laos' world-heritage city filled with temples and French colonial fragments, and then fly to chic **Chiang Mai** for elephant and hill-tribe adventures, Thai cooking courses and loads of temple-spotting.

Return to Bangkok (plane, train or bus) and work your way south to **Ko Tao** to learn how to dive before hitting the







Tea estate, Cameron Highlands (p400), Malaysia

seaside rock-climbing retreat of **Krabi** and other beachy hotspots, such as Ko Phi Phi, Ko Lanta and Ko Lipe, on Thailand's Andaman coast. Scoot across the border from Ko Lipe to Malaysia's **Pulau Langkawi** – high season only. Then take the ferry to the foodie's paradise of **Penang** and overland to Malaysia's multi-ethnic capital **Kuala Lumpur** with a stop in the green-tea plantations of the **Cameron Highlands**.

Catch a flight from Kuala Lumpur to **Jakarta**, Indonesia's capital, and soak up Java's renowned culture in **Yogyakarta**.

Then bus to **Gunung Bromo**, an active volcano, visited on pre-dawn hikes for sunrise summits. Leapfrog to **Bali** for sun, fun and the island's unique Hindu culture.

Catch a cheap flight to sophisticated **Singapore**, which has air connections to everywhere else, including Myanmar's **Yangon**, where you can explore the temples and villages of this formerly cloistered country. Or fly from Singapore to **Kalibo** (Philippines), then bask on **Boracay's** party beaches, transit through **Manila** to trek the rice terraces of **North Luzon** or just chill on the rustic beaches of **Palawan**.





8  
WEEKS

## Mainland to Borneo & Philippines

Cruise around mainland Southeast Asia, hitting the beaches and the highlands, and then bound over to Borneo and the Philippines to climb into the heavens and dive under the sea.

From **Bangkok**, head to **Ko Chang** and then slide into **Sihanoukville** for lots of sand and suds. Scoot to shabby-chic **Phnom Penh**. Adore the architectural wonder of the Angkor temples from the base town of **Siem Reap**. Fly to full-throttle **Ho Chi Minh City**. Migrate to the beaches of **Mui Ne** or **Nha Trang**, the antique city of **Hoi An** and imperial **Hue**. Rest in **Hanoi**, a mature, manicured capital. Cruise karst-filled **Halong Bay** and detour to **Sapa** and its highland communities of ethnic minorities. Return to Hanoi.

Fly to **Vientiane** (Laos), bus to **Vang Vieng** and on to **Luang Prabang**, a riverside city. Continue to the trekking centre of **Luang Nam Tha**. Ride the Mekong River south to the Laos-Thailand border at **Huay Xai**.

Slide into **Chiang Mai**. Escape to the mountains of **Pai** or **Mae Hong Son** for stunning mountain vistas and intriguing border cultures. Return to the lowlands for the ancient Thai capitals at **Sukhothai** and **Ayuthaya** before returning to **Bangkok**.

Fly to Myanmar's **Yangon** and continue to the island monasteries of **Inle Lake**, the ancient capital of **Mandalay** and the ruins of **Bagan**.

From Yangon, fly to **Kuala Lumpur**. Explore **Taman Negara**, an ancient wilderness. Cruise through **Melaka**, a colonial port of call. Return to KL for a well-planned, well-funded tour of Malaysian Borneo. Fly to **Kota Kinabalu**, Sabah, and ascend **Mt Kinabalu**, Borneo's highest peak. Head east to **Sepilok's** orangutan sanctuary. Swing over to **Semporna**, the gateway to dive sites. Culture vultures: detour to oil-rich Brunei and its unassuming capital, **Bandar Seri Begawan** (BSB), surrounded by pristine rainforests and water villages.

Cheap flights link Kota Kinabalu with **Manila** (Philippines). Bus to the mountains of **North Luzon**, then fly to **Cebu**, gateway to the Visayas beaches.



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Top: Mt Kinabalu (p440), Malaysia

Bottom: Beach at Boracay (p576), Philippines

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WEEKS

## Mainland Beaches to Indonesia

PLAN YOUR TRIP ITINERARIES

Become a certified beach connoisseur by tracing the coastline of Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia. In-between, grab a few slices of culture to keep things balanced.

From **Bangkok**, make a beeline for the islands in the Gulf of Thailand: dive-crazy **Ko Tao** and hippie **Ko Pha-Ngan**. Get certified on Tao, then follow the herd to the Andaman coast. **Khao Lak** is the base for live-aboard dive trips to the world-class Surin and Similan islands. Skip down to adrenalin-charged **Krabi**, home to rock climbing and cave exploring, and then island-hop to Rasta-vibed **Ko Lipe**. Cross the border at **Pulau Langkawi** for **Penang's** famous hawker centres.

From Penang, bus to **Kota Bharu**, the jumping-off point for the fabulous jungle islands of **Pulau Perhentian**. Head south to **Mersing**, the mainland port for sleepy **Pulau Tioman**, before returning to civilisation in **Kuala Lumpur**, for flights to Indonesia.

From Indonesia's tip in **Medan**, on the island of Sumatra, visit the orang-utan outpost of **Bukit Lawang** and go volcano hiking in **Be-rastagi**. From Medan fly to lovely Banda Aceh for dive-tastic **Pulau Weh**.

Say goodbye to rugged Sumatra and buzz over to Java, touching down in **Jakarta**, Indonesia's intense capital. Cruise **Yogyakarta** and its culture trail. Day trip to the giant stupa of **Borobudur** or huff-and-puff up **Gunung Bromo** volcano for a sunrise spectacle.

Leapfrog to **Denpasar**, in Bali, to nuzzle the sandy beaches of the Bukit Peninsula or get cultured in Ubud. Party in **Gili Trawangan**, spot dragons on **Komodo** and go rustic on the beaches of **Flores**.

Check your visa and apply for an extension back in Denpasar before flying to **Makassar** on the island of Sulawesi. Pay your respects in **Tana Toraja**, where funeral rituals are ancient and bloody. Travel to the Togeans Islands and the northern diving board of **Pulau Bunaken**; it might feel faraway, but it is worth it. Fly from **Manado** to Kuala Lumpur.

Alternatively, from Denpasar hop over to Timor-Leste's capital of **Dili** to tour old colonial towns and uncrowded reefs.

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Top: Longtail boats, Ko Lipe (p775), Thailand  
Bottom: Religious ceremony, Ubud (p208), Indonesia



## Off the Beaten Track: Southeast Asia

### NONG KHAI (THAILAND)

Few border crossings are as charming as this pretty town perched on the banks of the Mekong River. Cycle around the riverside market and the strange but wonderful Buddhist-Hindu sculpture garden. (p728)

### MAWLAMYINE (MYANMAR)

With Myanmar's newly relaxed borders, overlanders can cross from Thailand's Mae Sot to this urban centre boasting stupa-studded hills and scenic onward travel to Hpa-an or Yangon. (p500)

### BATTAMBANG (CAMBODIA)

This lovely French colonial town is known for its river trips to Siem Reap. Nearby are ancient temples and rural scenery. (p103)

### KRANJI COUNTRYSIDE ASSOCIATION (SINGAPORE)

When in cities, do as city-dwellers do: go back to nature. This collection of farms on the outskirts of Singapore lures urbanites on 'agri-tainment' tours of fields, fish ponds and produce stands. (p636)





### BA BE NATIONAL PARK (VIETNAM)

A stunning landscape of limestone mountains, sloping valleys, mist-shrouded lakes and evergreen forests provides a full dose of nature exploration. For a cultural hook, ethnic minorities host rustic homestays. (p837)

### THAM KONG LO (LAOS)

A watery underworld awaits at this 7.5km-long cave explored by longtail boat. Daylight recedes as you putter deep into the darkness and bulbous-shaped calcified sculptures decorate the vaulted ceiling. (p353)

### SIARGAO ISLAND (PHILIPPINES)

Famous for its surf break, this Catholic island in northern Mindanao is blessed with pretty coves, fine blonde beaches and laid-back villages. Nearby Camiguin has volcano hikes, reef dives and scenic wandering. (p593)

### BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN (BRUNEI DARUSSALAM)

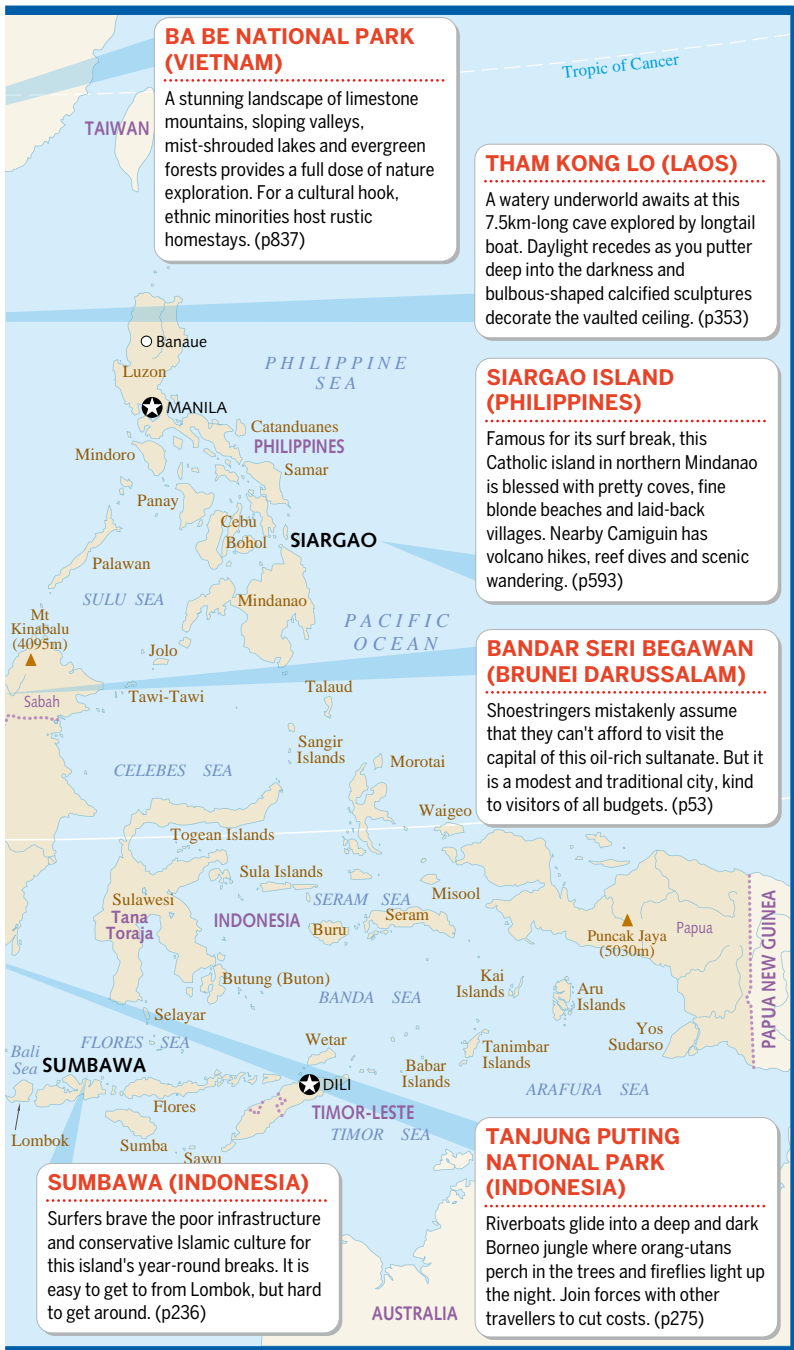
Shoestringers mistakenly assume that they can't afford to visit the capital of this oil-rich sultanate. But it is a modest and traditional city, kind to visitors of all budgets. (p53)

### SUMBAWA (INDONESIA)

Surfers brave the poor infrastructure and conservative Islamic culture for this island's year-round breaks. It is easy to get to from Lombok, but hard to get around. (p236)

### TANJUNG PUTING NATIONAL PARK (INDONESIA)

Riverboats glide into a deep and dark Borneo jungle where orang-utans perch in the trees and fireflies light up the night. Join forces with other travellers to cut costs. (p275)





# Map Legend

## Sights

- Beach
- Bird Sanctuary
- Buddhist
- Castle/Palace
- Christian
- Confucian
- Hindu
- Islamic
- Jain
- Jewish
- Monument
- Museum/Gallery/Historic Building
- Ruin
- Sento Hot Baths/Onsen
- Shinto
- Sikh
- Taoist
- Winery/Vineyard
- Zoo/Wildlife Sanctuary
- Other Sight

## Activities, Courses & Tours

- Bodysurfing
- Diving
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Course/Tour
- Skiing
- Snorkelling
- Surfing
- Swimming/Pool
- Walking
- Windsurfing
- Other Activity

## Sleeping

- Sleeping
- Camping

## Eating

- Eating

## Drinking & Nightlife

- Drinking & Nightlife
- Cafe

## Entertainment

- Entertainment

## Shopping

- Shopping

## Information

- Bank
- Embassy/Consulate
- Hospital/Medical
- Internet
- Police
- Post Office
- Telephone
- Toilet
- Tourist Information
- Other Information

## Geographic

- Beach
- Hut/Shelter
- Lighthouse
- Lookout
- Mountain/Volcano
- Oasis
- Park
- Pass
- Picnic Area
- Waterfall

## Population

- Capital (National)
- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
- Town/Village

## Transport

- Airport
- Border crossing
- Bus
- Cable car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Metro/MRT station
- Monorail
- Parking
- Petrol station
- Skytrain/Subway station
- Taxi
- Train station/Railway
- Tram
- Underground station
- Other Transport

## Routes

- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed road
- Road under construction
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour detour
- Path/Walking Trail

## Boundaries

- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

## Hydrography

- River, Creek
- Intermittent River
- Canal
- Water
- Dry/Salt/Intermittent Lake
- Reef

## Areas

- Airport/Runway
- Beach/Desert
- Cemetery (Christian)
- Cemetery (Other)
- Glacier
- Mudflat
- Park/Forest
- Sight (Building)
- Sportsground
- Swamp/Mangrove

Note: Not all symbols displayed above appear on the maps in this book



### **Shawn Low**

**Singapore** Shawn grew up in hot, humid, food-crazy Singapore but later made his way further south to less hot, less humid, food-crazy Melbourne (Australia, not Florida). He's spent the last six years working for Lonely Planet: as an editor, commissioning editor, author, TV host and travel editor. Returning home to check out the bars and hawkers is a hard job, but someone's gotta do it. So he did. Post-trip hunger pangs have struck and Shawn is longing to return for more of that delicious

Singapore hawker food. He's also on Twitter @shawnlw.



### **Simon Richmond**

**Myanmar (Burma)** Simon is an award-winning freelance author and photographer who has produced many guides for Lonely Planet since 1999, including several in Southeast Asia. He first visited Myanmar in 2001, returning a decade later in 2011 to coordinate the 11th edition of Lonely Planet's *Myanmar*. He was back again in 2013 to coordinate the 12th edition and take the pulse of Yangon, one of the region's most underrated cities. Read more about him at [www.simonrichmond.com](http://www.simonrichmond.com).



### **Daniel Robinson**

**Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia** Daniel has been covering Southeast Asia and its rainforests since 1989, when he researched Lonely Planet's first, award-winning guides to Vietnam and Cambodia. On his many visits to Borneo, he has developed a fondness for travelling *ulu-ulu* (way upriver) by longboat, tramping through the jungle in search of gargantuan *Rafflesia* flowers, and slurping *Sarawak laksa*.

Daniel, who has a BA in Near Eastern Studies from Princeton University, was the coordinating author for Lonely Planet's *Borneo* guide.



### **Iain Stewart**

**Vietnam** Iain first visited Vietnam in 1991 and has returned many times since to write several editions of Lonely Planet's *Vietnam*. Highlights on this trip were travelling with mate Vinh and his family, the swim-through caves of Phong Nha, mountain biking around Dalat, hanging out in Hoi An, bar-hopping in HCMC and the silence of Con Dao.



### **Ryan Ver Berkmoes**

**Indonesia** Ryan Ver Berkmoes first visited Indonesia in 1993. On his visits since he has criss-crossed the archipelago, trying to make a dent in those 17,000 islands. Recent thrills included returning to the amazing Banda Islands, finding the perfect love villa on Bali and going nose to nose with a komodo dragon. Off-island, Ryan splits his time between the US and Europe and writes about Indonesia, travel and more at [ryanverberkmoes.com](http://ryanverberkmoes.com). Follow him @ryanvb.



### **Richard Waters**

**Laos** Richard is an award-winning journalist and works for the *Independent*, *Sunday Times*, *Wanderlust* and *National Geographic Traveller*. He lives with his fiancée and two kids in the Cotswolds. Laos is one of his favourite countries in the world; his journeys there started in '99 and have kept him going back ever since. He's also authored a thriller set in Laos, *Black Buddha*, which is published on Kindle. To read more of his travel journalism visit: [www.richardwaters.co.uk](http://www.richardwaters.co.uk).



## OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Beijing and Delhi, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

## OUR WRITERS



### China Williams

**Coordinating Author, Thailand** Every two years, China Williams leaves her quiet suburban life for a guidebook deployment to Thailand. This time she brought along her one-year-old daughter as her research assistant and to boost her cuteness factor. It worked; the Thais were smitten. China first came to Thailand in 1997 to teach English in Surin. Since then she has shuttled across the Pacific for more than a decade for various Thailand and Southeast Asia titles. Thailand gets richer and happier with every visit. China lives in Catonsville, Maryland (USA) with her husband Matt, son Felix and daughter Phoebe.



### Greg Bloom

**Cambodia, Philippines** Greg has lived in Southeast Asia for more than a decade, dividing his time between Manila and his current home of Phnom Penh. Over the years he has covered virtually every Cambodian province and dozens of Philippine islands for Lonely Planet. When not writing about Southeast Asia, Greg might be found snouting around the former Soviet Union (he once called Kyiv home) or running around Asia's ultimate frisbee fields.



### Celeste Brash

**Malaysia** Celeste first visited Malaysia while she was studying at Chiang Mai University, Thailand in 1993 and she later moved to Singapore to teach English. The more of Malaysia she's visited, the more she's fallen in love with it – especially the food. When not desensitising her taste buds with *sambal*, Celeste lives in Portland, Oregon, with her husband and two children. She's contributed to around 50 Lonely Planet titles. Find out more about her at [www.celestebrash.com](http://www.celestebrash.com).



### Stuart Butler

**Indonesia** Stuart first hit the Indonesian shores at the end of a long trans-Asia surf trip. Not surprisingly it was his favourite stop. Since then he has made repeated visits for waves, walks and wildlife, and to delve deeper into the rich culture of the islands. The stories and photos from his Indonesian travels have appeared frequently in the international surf and travel media. Hailing from southwest England, Stuart now lives on the beautiful beaches of southwest France with his wife and young son

and daughter.

OVER MORE  
PAGE WRITERS

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